AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend paragraphs [0025]-[0027] as follows:

[0025] FIG. 1 illustrates a metadata exchange strategy framework 102 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Metadata exchange strategy framework 102 includes metadata change manager 110, metadata exchange strategy 112, and execution engine 114. Metadata change manager 110 provides functions for creating difference reports, such as difference report ~~108~~111, as described below in conjunction with FIGs. 2, 3, 5, and 8. Metadata exchange strategy 112 provides functions for creating an action plan, such as action plan 113, as described below in conjunction with FIG. 4, 6, 7, and 8. Execution engine 114 provides functions for executing the action plan as described below in conjunctions with FIGs. 4 ~~and 8~~and 8.

[0026] Metadata exchange strategy framework 102 accepts source object 104 and target object 106 and creates merged object 108. Source object 104, target object 106, and merged object 108 contain metadata describing respective database objects. Source object 104 and target object ~~108~~106 are descriptions of the same database object that differ, possibly because their metadata definition may have been updated or customized by different users.

[0027] Source object ~~102~~104 and target object 106 are typically Oracle database objects and not just tables and columns (i.e. cubes, transformations, and the like). Also source object ~~102~~104 and target object 106 may include other objects such as files in a file system or records in a file that have been captured using UML and stored in the database during design time. This is typically achieved by having a table called "file" and a table called "record." The metadata of ~~ext6ernal~~ external table objects refers to the record metadata in the record table. These are not database objects, but still dictate the structure of some database objects. For ~~example~~example, the structure of an external table is dictated by the

file and record that it is referring to. Hence, there exists a requirement that external tables have to be merged ~~form~~from the record during design time, although the record~~ed~~ is not a database object. Hence, this is not just restricted to database objects but also to others that are marked in UML and stored in the database as classes, attributes, and associations.

Please amend paragraph [0030] as follows:

[0030] Adapter 304 first converts record 302 into compatible external table 306. Metadata change manager 110 then receives external tables 202 and 306 and creates a difference report 308, which describes the differences between external tables 202 and record ~~302~~306, which are ultimately the differences between external table 202 and record 302.

Please amend paragraphs [0033]-[0034] as follows:

[0033] Creation of an action plan requires the user to specify if a merge or a replace plan is preferred. The replace plan means deleting everything ~~form~~ from the target ~~the~~ that does not have a match in the source, while the merge plan would not allow deletion of anything from the target.

[0034] After the action plan has been created, the user can customize the action plan to apply the specific actions that are desired. Applying the action plan causes creation, deletion, or updates of the target object. Also, the user has the ability to specify which attributes in the target ~~that~~ need to ~~be~~ be updated in the event of a create action or an update action ~~in the target~~. The user can also change the values to suit the required needs. This is determined at the time when the user wants to execute the created action plan.

Please amend paragraph [0042] as follows:

[0042] FIG. 8 presents a flowchart illustrating the process of merging metadata associated with a first object and metadata associated with a second object in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The system starts when a first metadata associated with the first version of an object is received (step 802). Next, the system receives the second metadata associated ~~whit~~ with the second version of the object (step 804). Note that steps 802 and 804 can occur in the opposite order or simultaneously. If needed, the system converts the second metadata to be compatible with the first metadata (step 806).